

**For Immediate Release
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Celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of Vermont Workers' Compensation Act
Conference September 15 | Special Edition VBA Journal | Educational Outreach

Montpelier – The 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Vermont Workers' Compensation Act is being commemorated this year with a series of initiatives and events including outreach to local schools, recognition at the Vermont Legislature, and culminating with a special conference in Montpelier on September 15, 2015.

A grand compromise between labor and management, the Act grew out of concerns from both workers and employers about the impact of work-related injuries. The no-fault insurance program adopted helped ensure that workers had to access medical attention and compensation lost wages while employers gained insurance against litigation and costs that could jeopardize their businesses. Since enactment, the Act has enabled many thousands of Vermonters to access treatment and return to work.

In recognizing the important milestone, Governor Peter Shumlin stated that "Vermont has a long history of protecting our workforce while promoting a growing economy. The nature of many jobs has changed in the 100 years since the Vermont Workers' Compensation Act was passed. However, it is still vitally important that Vermonters know that if they are injured while on the job, the financial safety net and health care they need is ready and available to get them back healthy and working."

Commissioner of Labor Annie Noonan added that "while there have been changes to the law since it was enacted 100 years ago, the core mission of the Act – to treat employees fairly following a workplace injury and protect employers from costly litigation – is still relevant and worth celebrating in today's world."

As part of the celebration, the summer issue of the *Vermont Bar Journal* will focus on workers' compensation in Vermont, featuring articles by Paul Gillies, Keith Kasper, Heidi Groff, and an interview with Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry, Hon. Brian Burgess. In addition, the planning group is working with the Vermont Department of Education to develop a body of classroom-ready materials for use by teachers in Vermont schools. Earlier this year, the Vermont Legislature passed a resolution (HCR 90) recognizing the Act's value to Vermonters.

The Act will be celebrated with a Centennial Conference on September 15, 2015 in Montpelier, Vermont. This conference will feature sessions on the history of worker's compensation nationally and Vermont, best practices and lessons for employers and workers in return to work and workplace safety, reviews of major reforms around the country, and proposals for what can improve workers' compensation in Vermont going forward. The conference will also highlight and support **Kids' Chance of Vermont**, the recently established local branch of the national Kids' Chance program. Kids' Chance offers college tuition scholarships to the children of injured workers.

The conference agenda and registration information are available under "Events" at www.aivt.org or at www.labor.vermont.gov home page. For more information on this event and other initiatives and activities, please see the contacts below.

Additional Contacts:

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